

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 00825 230020Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 /039 W
-----231051Z 085883 /22
R 221737Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4537

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 0825

DEPARTMENT PASS USIA, ILA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, GY
SUBJECT: NEWSPAPER STRIKE AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: WORKERS OF GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS THE GUYANA
"CHRONICLE" AND "THE CITIZEN" ARE ON STRIKE FOR HIGHER WAGES
AND A "SYMPATHY STRIKE" BY OTHER WORKERS IN COMMUNICATIONS AND
POSSIBLY THE SUGAR INDUSTRY IS BEING CONSIDERED. IT IS DOUBT-
FUL THAT THE GOG CAN MEET THE STRIKERS' DEMANDS AS THE
GOVERNMENT PRESS HAS AN OPERATING DEFICIT OF OVER G\$350,000,
PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF A SHARP DROP IN ADVERTISING REVENUES
FROM GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS WHICH ALSO HAVE NO MONEY. THIS
SITUATION TYPIFIES GUYANA TODAY. END SUMMARY.

1. ON TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 90 PERCENT OF PRODUCTION WORKERS
OF GUYANA NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS LTD., PUBLISHERS OF GOG-OWNED
NEWSPAPERS, "GUYANA CHRONICLE" AND "THE CITIZEN," STAGED
"SICK OUT." AS A RESULT OF THIS ACTION, NO EDITION OF
"CHRONICLE," THE MORNING DAILY, WAS PUBLISHED FOR THAT
DATE. HOWEVER, THE AFTERNOON DAILY, "THE CITIZEN," WAS
PUBLISHED ON APRIL 19.

2. ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, THE WORKERS DECIDED TO TAKE
STRIKE ACTION AND NO NEWSPAPERS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED SINCE.
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3. THE BASIC DEMAND MADE BY THE STRIKING WORKERS IS FOR MORE
MONEY. STRIKING WORKERS BELONG TO COMMERCIAL AND CLERICAL
WORKERS UNION (CCWU) WHOSE PRESIDENT IS GUYANESE LABOR LEADER,
GORDON TODD. TODD IS THE MOST AGGRESSIVE AND INDEPENDENT-
MINDED OF GUYANESE LABOR UNION PRESIDENTS, AND BELIEVES THAT
GUYANA TRADES UNION COUNCIL SHOULD BE AN INDEPENDENT BODY

NOT SUBSERVIENT TO NOR AFFILIATED WITH THE GOG.

4. ACCORDING TO INFORMED CCWU SOURCES, TODD PLANS TO HOLD MEETING WITH OFFICIALS OF HIS UNION AND STRIKING NEWSPAPER WORKERS BETWEEN NOW AND SUNDAY EVENING TO DETERMINE: (A) DURATION OF STRIKE; (B) WHETHER, IF DECISION IS REACHED ON PROLONGING STRIKE, TO CALL FOR "SYMPATHY SUPPORT" TO NEWSPAPER WORKERS BY ALL CCWU MEMBERS; AND (C) WHETHER TO REQUEST "SYMPATHY SUPPORT" FROM POWERFUL GUYANA AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION (GAWU), WHICH REPRESENTS VAST MAJORITY OF GUYANA'S SUGAR WORKERS AND WHOSE PRESIDENT IS OPPOSITION LEADER, DR. CHEDDI JAGAN.

5. IF TODD DECIDES ON OPTION (B) IN PARA 5, THIS WILL MEAN A SHUTDOWN OF GOG-OWNED RADIO GBS AND PRIVATELY OPERATED RADIO DEMERARA, WHOSE STAFF MEMBERS BELONG TO CCWU. GUYANA WOULD THEN BE LEFT WITH NO NEWSPAPER AND RADIO SERVICES, EXCEPT FOR THE OPPOSITION PPP PARTY NEWSPAPER, "THE MIRROR," PUBLISHED FIVE DAYS A WEEK.

6. GOG MINISTERS OF INFORMATION AND LABOR ARE ATTEMPTING TO MEDIATE DISPUTE AND SETTLE STRIKE. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO INFORMED CCWU SOURCES, STRIKING WORKERS HAVE BEEN REQUESTING WAGE INCREASES WITHOUT SUCCESS SINCE 1973. EACH TIME THEIR REQUESTS HAVE BEEN SHELVED, AND THEY REPORTEDLY ARE NOW ADAMANT. THE STRIKING WORKERS CONTEND THAT THEIR BASIC DEMANDS ARE JUST BECAUSE OF THE RISING COST OF LIVING. THEY HOPE TO FORCE THE GOG INTO TAKING DEFINITIVE ACTION TO RESOLVE SATISFACTORILY THEIR PROBLEMS. CONFIDENTIAL

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UNFORTUNATELY, MORE MONEY IS PRECISELY WHAT THE GOG DOES NOT HAVE AT THIS TIME.

7. CCWU "SYMPATHY SUPPORT" BEYOND THAT OF ITS MEMBERS IN THE LOCAL RADIOS TO INCLUDE ITS MEMBERSHIP AMONG STATE CORPORATIONS, BANKS AND THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR COULD SUBSTANTIALLY ADD TO THE ECONOMIC WOES FACING GUYANA. "SYMPATHY SUPPORT" FROM GAWU WOULD PARALYZE THE COUNTRY'S SUGAR INDUSTRY, CURRENTLY BESET BY A HOST OF PROBLEMS, AND COULD LEAD TO A MAJOR CONFRONTATION OF SERIOUS PROPORTIONS BETWEEN LABOR, THE GOG, AND THE PPP.

8. GOVERNMENT-OWNED NEWSPAPERS ARE OPERATING AT A CURRENT DEFICIT OF G\$350,000. THE "CHRONICLE" OWES THE OPPOSITION NEWSPAPER, "THE MIRROR," G\$125,000 FOR NEWSPRINT. GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS, THE PRINCIPAL SOURCES OF NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT, ARE UNABLE TO PAY FOR ADS IN GOG-OWNED NEWSPAPERS. BLACKEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAGES, NEWSPAPERS, LABOR STRIKES
Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
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Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
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Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2728115
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEWSPAPER STRIKE AND RELATED DEVELOPMENTS SUMMARY: WORKERS OF GOVERNMENT NEWSPAPERS THE GUYANA
"CHRONICLE" AND "THE CITIZEN" ARE ON STRIKE FOR HI
TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, ELAB, GY, CHRONICLE, THE CITIZEN
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/64348ea0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009